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## BARRIERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE REGION

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The aim of this article is to describe the general conditions for the development of creative industries in Podlaskie Voivodship from Poland. This region on the background of the country is characterized by the highest level of cultural diversity and multiculturalism policy. However, there are a number of barriers for the creative industries. First article discusses the regional characteristics and then the basic theoretical approaches and conclusions of the author's own research. The following sections discuss the conclusions and recommendations for regional policy and management of cultural sector entities that may be relevant also for other culturally diverse regions.

**Keywords:** creative industries, management of cultural institutions, diversity, regional policy.

### Introduction

At the beginning of 21st century growing importance of culture in socio-economic development is observed. Cultural industries and the wider creative industries represent the area that is the main source of economic growth. In this article's conclusion from the study of barriers to development of creative industries in culturally diverse regions will be discussed. Diversity can provide both resources for endogenous development, as well as be a barrier in communication or a source of conflicts between different ethnic and national groups. Therefore implementation of strategies towards multicultural and diversity management is important.

This article is based on a critical assessment of the main conclusions from the Polish project "Diagnosis of Participation in Culture in Podlaskie Voivodship" (Poleszczuk *et al.* 2012; Klimczuk 2013a). It was completed in 2012 by The Aleksander Węgierko Drama Theater in Białystok and SocLab Foundation as a part of Culture Observatory program maintained by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland. The primary objective of this project was to provide a complete, adequate, reliable and practical knowledge in the field of cultural participation, needs and perceptions by the region's inhabitants. A second aim was to determine the quantitative and qualitative image

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of cultural institutions and the assessment of artistic activity management.

Diagnosis includes the use of a range of research methods and techniques: desk research, 4 focus group interviews, 5 individual in-depth interviews, computer-assisted telephone interviews on the sample of 550 residents of Podlaskie Voivodeship aged 15–74, pen and paper interviews with 150 high culture users from Białystok as well as computer-aided web interviews with 150 Drama Theater users. Conclusions from these studies may be useful for researchers and managers of cultural institutions in the culturally diverse regions.

### **Cultural diversity and multiculturalism policy in Podlaskie Voivodeship**

Podlaskie Voivodeship, with its capital in the city of Białystok is situated in the eastern part of Poland. It borders with Belarusian Voblasts of Grodno and Brest to the east, Lithuanian Counties of Alytus and Marijampolė to the northeast and with the Kaliningrad Oblast of Russia to the north. The region covers an area of 20.180 km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. 6.4% of the Poland. In 2011, the 31.9% region surface was areas for nature conservation (GUS 2013). In the years 1988–2011 there was a slight increase in the number of residents – from 1188 thousand inhabitants in 1988 to 1200 thousand in 2011 (GUS 2003: 32; GUS 2013). According to the estimates of Central Statistical Office from 2008 the reduction in the number of the region's population is expected (GUS 2009: 173). Until 2035 year, there will be 120 thousand inhabitants less in Podlaskie Voivodeship. The region is characterized by a negative balance of internal and international migration for permanent residence. In 2011 year amounted –1.6 per 1000 population and was higher than the national average equal –0.1. The region is characterized by poor industrialization – there are two important development directions: agriculture and tourism. The registered unemployment

rate in 2011 year was 14.1% and exceeded the national average 12.5%. Value of GDP per capita in 2010 year was 26985 PLN (about 8881 USD or 6388 EUR), while the national average was 37096 PLN (about 12209 USD or 8781 EUR).

Podlaskie Voivodeship is the part of Poland with the biggest populations of national and ethnic minorities (GUS 2008). The region is characterized by the residence and activities of representatives and institutions of the following groups: Belarusians (46 thousand), Lithuanians (5 thousand), Ukrainians (1.4 thousand), Russians (0.6 thousand), Jews (several families), Tatars and Roma (about 0.3 thousand). The region also inhabits religious-denominational groups (Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Protestants, Old Believers), regional communities (Białystok, Lomża, Suwałki), communities distinguished by the culture of origin/historical nationality (peasants, post-nobility, small town) and migrants. This diversity has been generally recognized by the authorities of the region and considered as one of its key strengths in strategy development (UMWP 2006: 5). However, in the updated strategy, it was found that cultural diversity has not resulted in the development of regional tourism and economy. Therefore it was decided to move away from a regional vision in which the multiculturalism policy was one of the guiding principles. A new vision is: “Podlaskie Voivodeship: green, open, accessible and entrepreneurial” (UMWP 2013: 19, 23). A. Sadowski, a reviewer of the final report of the project “Diagnosis of Participation in Culture in Podlaskie Voivodeship”, stressed a similar observation. He claims: “A review of statistical data on participation in culture as well as cultural offers conducted from the perspective of regional cultural policy, especially two generalizations are worthy of highlight. The authors suggest, in principle, the lack of regional cultural industries and the fact that the cultural diversity of residents is not reflected in action programs” (Sadowski 2012: 2).

Desk research of strategic documents in Podlaskie Voivodeship showed that cultural

diversity was defined in a very general way. Actually carried out or planned for the implementation projects and activities that encourage or exploit related dimension of cultural capital resources were not pointed out in the documents. For example, “Program for Cultural Development of Podlaskie Voivodeship to 2020” very generally recognized this issue as a strategic aim VII “Creating conditions for intercultural dialogue, supporting minorities, ethnic and religious initiatives” and refers to it in objectives I “Protection of monuments and cultural heritage” and V “Increase in the level of participation in culture” (UMWP 2008: 16, 19, 21). Later “Regional Social Policy Strategy for 2010–2018” brings this theme only in the diagnostic layer, although it presumes compliance with the mission of “Regional Development Strategy of the Podlaskie to 2020”, which was: “Podlaskie Voivodeship as a region of active and sustainable development with the use of environmental values, multicultural tradition and the borderline position” (UMWP 2006: 33; ROPS 2010: 106). In 2009, multiculturalism constituted the theme of application to European Capital of Culture contest for the city of Białystok, the capital of the region (UMB 2010b). This proposal has been rejected due to too little involvement of residents and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) into the construction of cultural policy.

“Diagnosis of Participation in Culture in Podlaskie Voivodeship” confirms that the stimulation of cultural diversity potential in the region is one of its key challenges (Poleszczuk *et al.* 2012: 50–51). Experts during interviews indicated that cultural diversity is used only in very commercialized forms, not associated with high culture. At the same time there is a closing of the various minority groups in their own borders (bonding social capital), limiting their openness to cooperation both between themselves and with representatives of the Polish population. Migration from the region of the creative persons that work or could work in creative industry was also emphasized. Some

experts considered that the construction of a multicultural society in the region is becoming a kind of myth. These opinions were supported by examples of closing the minority groups to cooperate and the absence of benefits for the region through its promotion by multiculturalism in comparing it to other regions of the country. It was noted that the region lacks public debate around these issues, which would allow the development of common positions and proposals for action to change the existing situation.

### **Culture and creative industries in the context of regional policy**

In the conducted study of regional cultural policy it was pointed out that in contrast to the idea of multiculturalism, concepts of culture and creative industries are generally absent in public discourse in Podlaskie Voivodeship (Poleszczuk *et al.* 2012: 28–29). This contrasts with the observed world development trends and recommendations from national and European strategic documents. Contemporary in developed countries the transition from cultural sectors to the creative industries is observed (Klasik 2010: 50–51). A. Klasik noted that these first outside public institutions include the production and distribution of cultural goods and services conducted for profit companies and individuals. In the case of creative industries the rules are: treatment of cultural activity as a specific effort and outcome; emphasizing creativity, understood as the ability to permanently create new goods and services, which have an economic value; and diversity of intellectual property forms. In the project “Diagnosis of Participation in Culture in Podlaskie Voivodeship” a broad understanding of cultural and creative industries was adopted according to C. Barker (2005: 415). His theory assumes that these industries are shaped in the cities, by including entities and institutions that, through communications, media, art, music, advertising and architecture among others are

creating attractiveness of cities, which is reflected further into an increase of employment, attracting investors and representatives of the creative class.

It should be noted that for some of the key cultural economics researchers, as R. Towse (2011: 387–389), the terms “cultural sectors” / “cultural industries” and “creative sectors” / “creative industries” are used interchangeably. According to others, such as D. Throsby (2010: 103–105, 2011: 38–39), industries are only part of certain sectors of the economy, while the concepts of “cultural sectors” / “cultural industries” have a narrower meaning and relate mainly to the traditional fields of art and culture, the mass products and services, like music, video games, movies, books and fashion, press, radio and television. The concepts of “creative sectors” / “creative industries” have their broader significance because in addition they include creative activity within not-traditional art and culture fields: the advertising industry, design, architecture and related sectors, such as software development, education, tourism, electronics, telecommunications. Creative industries contemporary are the most important areas of growth in the modern global economy and generate growth and employment in dependent industries, contribute to the revitalization of space, innovation and the income growth (see: UNCTAD 2010; Klasik 2010: 52, 55–58; Throsby 2010: 113–122; Kern 2011: 55–69).

Entities of the cultural sector in Podlaskie Voivodeship are largely concentrated in its capital – city of Białystok. The city has 294 thousand inhabitants, which is almost 24.5% inhabitants of the region. According to the non-government organizations database of Klon/Jawor (2013) in the region 246 NGOs are working within culture sector, whereof 176 has its headquarters in Białystok (71.5%). Database of City Office in Białystok (UMB 2013) contains 156 cultural sector entities, including public and commercial, while official NGOs database contains 107 cultural sector entities (68.5%). Study of the Central Statistical Office from 2009 show that

in Poland each region have average 12 theaters, 48 museums, 525 public libraries, 22 galleries, 252 cultural centers and 28 fixed cinemas (GUS 2010: 38–39). Podlaskie Voivodeship in terms of all types of cultural institutions is below the national average. The region has the lowest number of public libraries (2.9% of all national entities), underdeveloped houses of culture infrastructure (4.2%) and of fixed cinemas (3.3%). Most affordable to all residents of the region are fairly evenly spaced cultural centers and public libraries.

*Table 1. Cultural institutions in Białystok and Podlaskie Voivodeship in 2011 (Source: GUS 2013)*

Institutions	Białystok	Podlaskie Voivodeship	Białystok/ Podlaskie Voivodeship
Library facilities	17	247	6.88%
Research, professional libraries	27	57	47.37%
Fixed cinemas	3	14	21.43%
Museums including branches	5	27	18.52%
Drama theater	1	2	50.00%
Puppet theater	2	3	66.67%
Philharmonic	1	2	50.00%
Galleries and art salons	3	8	37.50%
Cultural establishments, centers, clubs and community centers	15	158	9.49%

Cultural sector in Białystok stands out positively comparing to Podlaskie Voivodeship. However city took the last place in the index of culture sector development that was taking into account all 18 provincial capitals in Poland (Namyślak 2013: 115). First place went to Cracow (result 0,731 in Hellwig's taxonomic method), second was Warsaw (0,648) and the third Opole (0,545). Cultural attractiveness of Białystok resulted with 0,055 and was

significantly lower than other cities from the poorer eastern Poland (e.g. Kielce 0,237; Lublin 0,224; Rzeszów 0,223). Index was calculated as a synthesis of five indicators from 2010 public statistics: (1) cultural institutions per 10,000 residents; (2) visiting cultural institutions per resident; (3) section R.90.0 of Polish economic entities system per 10,000 residents; creative sector associated with culture and entertainment; (4) expenditures per resident (in PLN) for cultural development and the protection of Polish national heritage; (5) revenue per resident (in PLN) from sources associated with cultural institutions and institutions protecting Poland's national heritage.

While in Podlaskie exists entities representing cultural and creative industries their

pro-development role is not quite the object of interest of public authorities or residents. According to Plawgo *et al.* (2011) the region needs more studies on: the state of the creative industry; its share in socio-economic development of the region; relations in projects of the cultural and creative sectors entities with related/dependent sectors; on the concept of development of such industries. Important barrier to the development of creative industries in the region is also the lack of adequate strategic approach of Białystok authorities. In “Białystok City Development Strategy for 2011–2020 plus” in a total area of culture, sport and tourism within the priority D.4. “Fostering entrepreneurship in the sphere of tourism and cultural activities” as one of the directions of

Table 2. Cultural institutions in Poland by voivodships in 2009 (Source: GUS 2010: 37)

Specification	Theaters*	Museums	Public libraries	Galleries**	Houses of culture***	Fixed cinemas
Poland	186	774	8392	346	4027	448
Dolnośląskie	18	58	643	19	262	44
Kujawsko-pomorskie	8	29	450	13	199	16
Lubelskie	6	46	601	10	188	28
Lubuskie	3	15	260	4	90	13
Łódzkie	12	46	561	40	238	28
Małopolskie	22	111	762	69	480	43
Mazowieckie	40	113	991	56	256	53
Opolskie	3	13	320	3	232	11
Podkarpackie	3	40	690	5	324	30
Podlaskie	7	24	246	9	169	15
Pomorskie	13	59	336	20	226	19
Śląskie	20	60	816	36	387	52
Świętokrzyskie	3	24	296	11	130	11
Warmińsko-mazurskie	4	25	319	14	146	23
Wielkopolskie	12	86	718	19	379	41
Zachodnio-pomorskie	12	25	383	18	321	21

\*Only the main stage, having its own team; \*\*Institutions engaged primarily or exclusively in exhibition business;

\*\*\*Cultural establishments, centers, clubs and community centers.

action was D.4.1. “Creating conditions for the development of cultural industries in the city” (UMB 2010a: 128).

The needs for growth of entrepreneurship in the sphere of culture were highlighted here as well as to stimulate the creation of a private impresario agency, which would create in a city a prestigious event recognized nationally and internationally. These actions have not been started so far due to a lack of political will. At the same time the document is missing a vision of creating a coherent strategy for cultural policy and industries by proposition to develop five different, thematic programs so the cultural field is divided. These programs are: (1) infrastructure development in the fields of culture,

tourism, sport and recreation; (2) activity development in the fields of culture, tourism, sport and recreation; (3) construction of sport and recreational facilities; (4) city cooperation with NGOs in the field of culture, art, protection of cultural and national heritage; (5) protection of monuments, cultural heritage and contemporary cultural goods. There is a lack of monitoring and evaluation of these tasks implementation. Information about the progress of those programs is not available for public.

“Diagnosis of Participation in Culture in Podlaskie Voivodship” made possible to note a further barriers to the development of cultural and creative industries in the region (Poleszczuk *et al.* 2012: 137–139). Regional

*Table 3. Major trends in the culture sector in Podlaskie Voivodship in 2000–2011 (Source: based on Poleszczuk et al. 2012)*

Positive trends	Negative trends	Selected proposals for regional policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Number of public libraries and their readers decreases</li> <li>– The fixed cinemas number decreases</li> <li>– Falling number of educational events in museums</li> <li>– Decrease in the number of viewers and listeners of theaters and musical institutions</li> <li>– Decreasing the number of events in cultural centers</li> <li>– Decreasing participation in artistic groups</li> <li>– Poor knowledge of cultural institutions among residents</li> <li>– Low use of high culture institutions offers (opera, philharmonic, theater, art gallery, museum)</li> <li>– Low level of participation in culture of: people over 60 years of age; from rural areas; of average or poor household conditions; with lower education</li> <li>– Low knowledge of cultural events among residents</li> <li>– No habits, values and attitudes favoring participation in culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase in the number of theaters and musical institutions</li> <li>– Improving the equipment of institutions in solutions for people with disabilities</li> <li>– Increase in viewing movies in fixed cinemas, including the Polish productions</li> <li>– Increase in the number of museums and their visitors</li> <li>– Increase in the number of exhibitions, art galleries, art clubs and their visitors</li> <li>– Increase in participation in clubs within cultural and community centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improving communication between public administration and various cultural institutions – public, non-governmental and commercial – in the field of organized events</li> <li>– Strengthening the administration of promotion for local cultural events to build a regional brand</li> <li>– Creation and development of the debate and co-operation platform with regard to internal and external promotion of the region</li> <li>– Reducing disparities in the field of participation in culture between the capital of the region and the rural areas through the creation of social cohesion programs and projects</li> <li>– Conducting systematic research and share their results by the institutions of culture</li> <li>– Increasing the quality and quantity of educational activities by cultural institutions with the aim of breaking the barriers in cultural participation</li> <li>– Building and promoting creative and education partnerships in the field of culture and the use of new media with universities, academic and business institutions such as incubators, science and technology parks</li> <li>– Cultural institutions governance, together with the users, for the realization of joint projects, their organization and promotion</li> <li>– Reducing the scale of a digital divide for persons over 45 years of age who do not have knowledge of cultural events as they often do not use the Internet</li> </ul>



cultural policy insufficiently explored the potential of NGOs, informal groups and commercial entities. Support for cultural initiatives in the area of social entrepreneurship and social economy, such as those involving tourism and handicrafts are also slightly. An important barrier is the long-standing perception of the Podlaskie as a peripheral and borderline region.

### Conclusions and recommendations

The article had an aim to describe general barriers to the development of creative industries in culturally diverse regions on the example of Podlaskie Voivodship from Poland. Selected theoretical concepts and conclusions of the research project “Diagnosis of Participation in Culture in Podlaskie Voivodship” were discussed. Attention was paid to the possibility of using cultural sector entities potential as well as conclusions regarding the implementation of the cultural policy at the regional level and in its capital – the city of Białystok.

One of the key challenges of the region is diagnostic and programming work for the construction of a regional model of a creative industry that would take into account local economic specialization and relationship with the innovation system (cf. Poleszczuk *et al.* 2012: 143–153). This objective should be achieved by creating a cross-sectoral cooperation and common diagnosis of local cultural resources in the context of supporting entrepreneurship. This process should involve regional authorities, cultural institutions, higher education, business environment and NGOs.

Other areas of cooperation in this context may be: cyclical, cross-sectoral meetings of experts for the promotion of culture; establishing a system for monitoring the effectiveness of promotional activities; combining the activities of cultural institutions by shared calendars and events; joint projects rooted in local history, associated with the local heritage and

monuments, aimed at solving specific problems residents. It is reasonable to build medialab – interdisciplinary cultural institution focused on cooperation, including scientists, artists and IT specialists (Klimczuk 2013b). The starting point for the construction of creative industry can also be development of “silver economy” as a policy for the creative ageing and old age. It is also possible to create the an rebate system between cultural, sport and commercial entities. It is also important to build cooperation between cultural institutions and local media in accordance with corporate social responsibility and with the objective of wider promotion of culture.

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